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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 412th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 18 May 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. KALPAGE

(Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN* declared the session open. He recalled that, in its resolution 46/49, the General Assembly had decided that the Conference on the Indian Ocean should be structured in more than one stage and that the first stage of the Conference should be convened in 1993 or as soon as possible. It had also decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should hold a session of five working days in 1992 to perform its preparatory functions for the various stages envisaged for the Conference.
2. The Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee had met on three occasions to consider the organization of work for the session and had outlined some of the questions which the Committee might want to consider in preparation for the first stage of the Conference. Those included the duration and dates of the Conference, the allocation of seats to the respective geographical regions in the General Committee, the number of Main Committees and working groups to be established, the duration of the general debate and of meetings of Main Committees and working groups, and the allocation of agenda items.
3. The Bureau had also discussed practical aspects of convening the first stage of the Conference in accordance with the provisions of resolution 46/49, with particular reference to the General Assembly's call "for the full and active participation in the Conference of permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean". In considering the question, the Bureau had borne in mind that three permanent members of the Security Council had withdrawn from the Ad Hoc Committee and that several major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, who were members of the Ad Hoc Committee, had not taken part in its work at the previous two sessions. The Bureau had felt that it would be useful to ascertain the views of the countries concerned regarding their participation in the first stage of the Conference and it had therefore asked him to hold consultations on the matter. During those consultations, three permanent members of the Security Council and some of the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean had said that they would not find it possible to participate in a Conference based on the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which in their view had been overtaken by the positive developments in international political relations. However, some countries had indicated that they would be willing to consider any new approaches and practical steps towards the achievement of the goal of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

* The full text of the Chairman's statement will be issued as document A/AC.159/L.116.

(The Chairman)

4. It was clear that the full participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean called for in General Assembly resolution 46/49 would not be served and the Ad Hoc Committee therefore needed to give the situation careful consideration. In that connection, he wished to emphasize the importance the Ad Hoc Committee attached to the convening of the Conference, despite the difficulties which might be involved.

5. Mr. CURE (Mauritius) requested that, in view of the importance of the information it contained, the Chairman's statement should be published as an official document of the Ad Hoc Committee.

6. The CHAIRMAN said he would take it that the Ad Hoc Committee wished him to ask the Secretariat to have his statement published as an official document.

7. It was so decided.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMEN

8. The CHAIRMAN said that it was necessary to elect a Vice-Chairman to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Mr. Isslamet Poernomo (Indonesia), who had been the Vice-Chairman from the Group of Asian States. He had been informed by the Permanent Mission of Indonesia that Mr. Jusuf was a candidate for that post. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Ad Hoc Committee wished to elect Mr. Jusuf by acclamation.

9. It was so decided.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, with regard to the other two vacancies, namely for a Vice-Chairman from the Group of Western European and Other States to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Miss Jill Courtney (Australia) and a Vice-Chairman from the Group of Eastern European States, letters had been sent to the Chairmen of the two regional groups concerned requesting them to submit nominations, but so far no replies had been received. However, he had received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Australia saying that Australia would not be seeking to fill the vice-chairman's position.

11. Mr. JUSUF (Indonesia) thanked the Ad Hoc Committee for the confidence it had expressed in his country by electing him Vice-Chairman. His delegation attached great importance to the preparatory work for the Conference and had hoped that the improved international climate would provide renewed impetus. However, the decision by certain countries to withdraw was a disturbing development and he appealed to those concerned to reconsider their position and to rejoin the Ad Hoc Committee. Further postponement of the Conference was in no one's interest, and his country was firmly committed to holding the Conference at the earliest possible moment in order to achieve the central objective of the Declaration.

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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/AC.159/L.115)

12. The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

13. The CHAIRMAN gave details of the proposed programme of work and said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Ad Hoc Committee wished to adopt it.

14. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.